



Frequently Asked Dam Safety Questions

Water Resources Center fact sheet

11/2006

I want to build a dam for a fishing lake. Do I have to get a permit?

If your dam will be 35 feet or greater in height, you may be required to obtain a construction permit from the Water Resources Center prior to start of construction. You should contact the Water Resources Center prior to building a dam.

I recently bought property that has an existing dam. The dam seems taller than 35 feet. Am I in violation of the law, and what should I do?

You should immediately contact the Water Resources Center. We will send a survey crew to measure the height of the dam to determine if it is 35 feet or higher. If it is, we will instruct you on how to obtain a permit for the dam. You will be required to complete most of the same steps that would be necessary if you were constructing the dam yourself.

I own a dam that is regulated by the Missouri Dam and Reservoir Safety Council and have a valid permit. However, additional homes have recently been built downstream of my dam. Will I be required to upgrade my dam to meet more stringent requirements?

Possibly. There are three downstream hazard classifications: Class 1 applies to high hazard dams; Class 2 to intermediate hazard dams; and Class 3 to low hazard dams. If your dam is permitted as a Class 1 dam, you will not be required to make further modifications. If your dam is a Class 2 or Class 3 dam, staff of the Water Resources Center will visit your dam and make a judgment regarding whether or not the new development downstream warrants changing your downstream hazard classification to a higher class.

I don't agree with the findings of the Water Resources Center staff. What can I do?

A dam owner has the right to appeal all decisions made by the staff of the Water Resources Center to the Dam and Reservoir Safety Council at one of its quarterly meetings. The Dam and Reservoir Safety Council is a seven-member panel appointed by the governor. If you wish to appeal, contact the staff, and we will advise you of the time and location of the next council meeting.